

**HB 5300 AN ACT REQUIRING LEGISLATIVE APPROVAL FOR THE
MERGER OR CLOSING OF INSTITUTIONS WITHIN THE CONNECTICUT
STATE COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES AND PROHIBITING THE
CONSOLIDATION OF THE REGIONAL COMMUNITY-TECHNICAL
COLLEGES**

Jamie Czikowsky

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Hello Senator Slap, Representative Elliott, and Distinguished Members of the Higher Education and Employment Advancement Committee,

My name is Jamie Czikowsky, I am a student at Tunxis, and I am the President of The Healthy Minds club, which promotes mental wellness.

I am here today to testify in support of HB 5300 because the consolidation of the Connecticut State Community Colleges will eliminate support systems that have served me in the three years I have been enrolled at Tunxis.

If I were a new student who hadn't taken algebra in five years, which was the case when I first enrolled, I would be forced, under this consolidation's proposal, to take a course several levels higher than I was able to. If I were a new student, I would have been forced to pay 224 dollars more tuition under a Board of Regents who told me their proposal is saving me money. If I were a new student, I would have seen my Black student peers be underserved as The Board of Regents push this consolidation as "racially equitable" in the very same breath as they divest from them.

But I am not that new student I just described. It's because of the student I just described that, I am ashamed to admit, I am relieved I am graduating this semester.

I am deeply saddened that my faculty and staff mentors are remaining at a college that, at one point, had integrity. Now, they have to cope with understaffing, divestment, and blatant disrespect from The Board of Regents who refuse to have any discourse with them about how to better serve their students. Faculty and staff

are the ones that have authority on what is best for me and my student peers. And they are being ignored.

I testified to a Board of Regents that wouldn't even look at their computer screen while I was addressing them at a virtual zoom meeting. I got in line to make my voice heard and, to quote Professor Dennis Bogusky of Norwalk Community College, "It's anything but students first. It's students last. It's students don't even get in line."

Signing HB-5300 will signal the General Assembly's intolerance of disrespect of students and faculty and staff. It will signal that people are more important than a profiteering bureaucracy. It will signal the protection and preservation of our community college institutions.

I plead with the General Assembly to support HB-5300. Signing in support of this Bill signals your support for the integrity of the community colleges in Connecticut that we are all fighting to maintain.

Thank you.